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ABSTRACT

Based on the view that the benefits of reading aloud are not widely recognized or sufficiently promoted, this book explains why reading aloud to young children has a strong emotional and intellectual impact on their ability to read and learn. The book begins with the recollection of how the author became aware of the effects of reading aloud on very young children. The book continues with a discussion of brain research during early development. Reading-aloud sessions are presented as the perfect opportunity for the type of conversations with children that have been linked to IQ development and as an opportunity for parents and children to connect emotionally with one another. The power of reading aloud to children is illustrated through anecdotes about teachers reading to their students and stories about memories of being read to as a child. The book recommends starting to read aloud to children the day they are born, developing a routine that works for the family, and developing a ritual for reading aloud at night. Suggestions are given for reading stories in an entertaining manner and enriching read-aloud sessions through spontaneous reading games, and encouraging children to write. The book also explains how reading comprises three clearly defined and separate "secrets"--understanding print, understanding language, and understanding how the world works (general knowledge)--explaining that when children do not learn to read or loathe reading, it is often because too great a focus has been placed on only one of the secrets of reading. Suggestions are made for selecting books for children of different ages, and how to make reading as attractive to children as watching television is also discussed. The book closes with a discussion of dealing with challenges that arise when children are beginning to read. (KB)

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